

# **The confescion**

**of the fayth of the**

**Sweſerlādes.**



[H. Singleton : 1548]



**T**his confescion was fyrste  
 wrytten and set out by the mini-  
 sters of the churche and congre-  
 gacion of Sweuerland/ Where  
 all godlynes is receyued / and  
 the worde hadde in mooste reue-  
 rence / and from thence was sent  
 vnto the Emperours maiestie /  
 then holdynge a grypt counsell  
 or parliamēt in the yeare of our  
 lord God. M.v.C. xxxvii. in the  
 moneth of February. Transla-  
 ted out of laten by George Ul-  
 cher / a scotchman / who was  
 burned in Scotland / the  
 yeare of oure lorde  
 M.v.C.xl.vi.





## Of the holy scripture.

**T**he canonycall or holy scripture whiche is the worde of god taught and gauen by the holy spyrte, & puplyshed vnto the worlde by the prophetes and holy apostles, which also is the moost perfyte and auncient science and doctryne of wysdome/it alone containeth consumatly all godlynes and all sozte and maner of facyon of lyfe.

## Of the exposition of scripture.

The interpretacion or exposicio of this holy wytte ought and shuld be sought out of it selfe, so that it shulde be the owne interpretour, the rule of charite and faythe haupnge gouernaunce.

## Of mannes tradicions.

As to other thynges, of tradicions of men howe bewtifull & how moch receyued



ued soeuer they be, what so euer traditi-  
ons withd̃a weth vs & stoppeth vs fro  
the scripture, of such do we answere the  
sayenges of the lord as of thynges hurt  
full and vnprofytable, they woꝛshyppe  
me in vayne teachyng the doctrynes of  
man. Mathi. xv.

### **C**Of the holy fathers.

For the whiche sorte of interpretacy-  
on so farre as the holy fathers hathe  
not gone fro it, not onely do we receyue  
them as interpretours of the scripture  
but also we honour and woꝛshyp them  
as chosen and beloued instrumentes of  
God

### **C**The ende & entent of the scripture.

The pꝛyncypal entent of al the scrip-  
ture canonicall is to declare that God  
is benvolent and frendly mynded to  
mankynde, and that he hathe declared  
that

that kyndnes in and throughe Iesu  
Chryste his onely sone, the which kynd  
nes is recepyd by fayth, but this fayth  
is effectuous through charitie and ex-  
pressed in an innocent lyfe

### **C** Of God.

Of God we byleue in this sorte, that  
he is Almyghtie, beyng one in substāce  
and thre in persones, whiche euen as he  
hathe created by his worde, that is his  
sone, all thynges of nothyng, so by his  
spirite and prouydence gouerns he, pre-  
serue, & noyseth he, most truly, ryght-  
ously, and wysely all thynges.

### **C** Of man.

Man whiche is the perfectest image  
of God in earthe, and also is the chiefe  
dignite and honoure amonge all crea-  
tures visibible, beyng made of ioule and  
body, of the whiche twayne the body is  
mortal



moztall, the soule immoztall, whan he  
was creat of god holy, by fallynge in  
byce and synne throughe his owne fal,  
drew with hym in that same ruen & fal,  
& so subiected all mākynde to the same  
calamitie & wretchednes that he fell in.

### ¶ Of originall synne.

And so this pestiferous infection  
whiche men calleth originall, hath infecte  
and ouerspyed the whole kynde of  
man, so far that by no helpe (he beyng  
the sone of wrathe and vengaunge and  
enemye of god) coude be healed by any  
meanes but by the helpe of god onely,  
foz yf there be any good that remayneth  
in man after the fall, that same beyng  
ioyntelie made weaker and weaker by  
our byce tournes to the worse, because  
the strengthe and power of euyl ouer-  
cometh it, and nother suffereth it vs to  
folowe reason noz yet to exersyse y god  
lynes of our mynde.

¶



## **¶ Of freewyll.**

Wherefore we attribute so free wyll to man as we whiche wyttynge & wyllynge to do good, fele experiēce of euyl, Also euyl trewly we maye do of oure owne wyll, but to embrace and folowe good (except we be elluminat styred bp and mounted, by the grace of Chyyst) we maye not, for god is he whiche woketh in vs, bothe to wyll, to performe, and to accomplishe for his owne good wyll sake, and of god cometh our helth and saluacion, but of our selfe commeth perdition.

## **¶ Of the eternall mynde of God to restore man.**

And howbeit that throught his faule man was subiecte vnto dampnacion, and also was runne vnder the iuste indignacion of God to take vengauce of hym, yet god the father neuer ceased to

to take a mercyfull cure ouer hym, the  
whiche thyng is manifest not onely of  
the fyrste pynces and the whole lawe,  
whiche as it is holy and good teaching  
vs the wyl of god, ryghtuousnes, and  
trute, so worketh it wraeth and stoereth  
vp synne within vs, and slacketh it  
not, and that not thzough any faulte of  
it selfe but thzough oure vyce, but also  
clerely appereth it thzough Chzist whi-  
che was ozdained and geuen for that  
purpose.

**¶ Of Iesus Chzist and that is  
done by hym.**

This Chzist the very sone of God, &  
very God and very man also was made  
our bzother, at the tyme appoynted he  
toke vpon hi whole man, made of soule  
and body, haupnge two natures vnper-  
myrte and one deuyne parson, to the  
intent that he shulde restore vnto lyfe  
vs that were deed, and make vs aryle  
of



of God annexte with hym selfe, he also after that he had taken vpon him of the immaculate virgin by operacion of the holy goost fleshe, whiche was holy by cause of the vnion of the godhed, which is and also was lyke to our fleshe in all thynges excepte in synfulness, and that bycause it behoued y sacrifice for synne to be cleane and immaculate, gaue that same fleshe to death for to expell all our synne by that meanes, and he also to the entent that we shuld haue one full and perfect hope and trust of our immortallitie hath raised vp agayne fro death to lyfe his owne fleshe, and hath set it and placed it in heauen at the ryghte hande of his almyghty father.

And there he sitteth our victorions champiō, our gyder, our capitayne, and heed, also our hyghest byshop in dede/ synne, death, and hell, beyng victoriously ouercome by hym, and defendeth our cause and pleateth it perpetually vntyll he shall reforme and fascion vs  
to



to that lykenes to whiche we were create, and bypunge vs to be partakers of eternall lyfe, and we loke for hym and beleue that he shall come at the ende of all ages to be our trewe ryghtuous iust Judge, and shall pronouce sentence agaynst all fleche, whiche shall be raysed vp befoze to that Judgement/ and that he shall exalte the godly a boue the hea uens, but the vngodly shall he cōdempne bothe body & soule to eternal destructiō.

And as he onely is our mediatour, and entercessour, hoste and sacrifice, bys hop, lozde, and our kynge. Also do we acknowlage and confesse hym onely to be our attonement and raunsome, satisfaction, expiacion, or wysdome, our defence, and our onely deliuerer, refusyng vtterly all other meane of lyfe and saluacion, excepte thus by Chryst onely.

**T**he ende of the preachynge  
of the Gospell.

And

And therfore in the whole doctryne  
of the euangelystes anūnciat and shew  
to be the fyrste, and chesely to be incul-  
cated and taught that we are safe onely  
by the mercie of God, and merite of our  
sautour Chyist. And that men maye per-  
ceyue and vnderstande the better howe  
necessary is the mercie of god, and Chy-  
stes merites for the, they synnes shuld  
be clerely shewed to them by the lawe,  
and remission by Chyistes death.

### **O**f fayth & of the power of it.

And these so godly benefites with the  
very sanctificacion of the holy spirite,  
do we optayne by fayth, the very trewe  
gyfte of God, and not throughe any o-  
ther power or strength of oure selues or  
merytes.

Whiche faythe is one certayne and  
vndouted substance and apzehehsyon  
of all thynges that we hope for to come  
of the kyndnes of god, and it cometh  
fyrste



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firste out of the selfe charitie, it woꝝketh  
noble frutes of al vertues, yet not with  
standynge we attribute no thyng to the  
dedes, althoughe they be godly yet be  
they mennes woꝝkes and actes, but the  
helthe and saluacion that is optayned,  
we attribute to the grace of god onely,  
and truely this woꝝshyppe a lone is  
the very trewe woꝝshyppe of god,  
saythe I meane mooste pꝛyngnaunt &  
plentifull of good woꝝkes without any  
confydence in the woꝝkes.

### **C**The congregacion oꝝ churche.

Also we holde and beleue that the  
churche, whiche is the congregacion &  
election of all holy men, whiche also is  
the spouse of Chꝛist whom he shall pꝛe-  
sente without spot vnto his father wa-  
shynge it in his owne blode, is of suche  
lyuely stones aforesayd layde vpo this  
lyuely rocke on this maner.

The whiche churche howbeit, it be  
euydenly



euydently knowne onely to the eyes of  
God, yet be certayne eternall ryghtes  
institute by Christ and be one publyke  
and lawfull teachynge, teachynge of the  
woꝛde of god, not onely is it spyed and  
knownen, but it is also so constituted by  
them that without the cerimonies there  
is no man reconed to be of it, excepte it  
be by a synguler pꝛeuiledge of God

### **T**he ministers of the woꝛd of god.

And foꝛ this cause we graunte the mi-  
nisters of the church to be Cooperatoꝛs  
of God as Paule calleth the, by whome  
God geueth and ministreth both know-  
ledge of our selfe, and remissiō of synne,  
and conuerteth men to hym selfe, ray-  
seth them vp, and comforteth the, affcay-  
eth them also, and iudgeth them/ but so  
that the vertue and efficacie therof we  
ascripbe also to the Loꝛde, and the mini-  
stracion of the sacramentes. Foꝛ it is  
manifest that this efficacie and powꝛe  
is not

is not bounde nor knytte to any creature, but is dyspensed lyberally and frely who soeuer and when soeuer he shall please/for he that watereth is nothyng, nor yet is he that planteth any thyng, but he that geueth the encreasment, whiche is God.

### **C**The power of the church.

The auctorite to preache Goddes worde, and to feede the Lordes flocke, the whiche properly is the power of the keyes, p̄scribynge and cōmaundyng, all men bothe hye and lowe all lyke, shulde be holy and inuiolat, and shulde be cōmitted onely to them that are mete therfore/and chosen other by the election of God, or elles by a sure and aduysed election of the church, or by theyr wyl to whome the churches depute & apoynt that offyce of chosynge.

**C**he



## **The chosyng of ministers or officers.**

**This ministracion and offyce shulde**  
be graunted to no man but to hi whom  
the ministers of the churche, and they  
vnto whom the charge is gyuen by the  
churches, & found iudged to be of know-  
lage in the law of god, & of inocent lyfe,  
the whiche seynge it is the very electiō  
of God, it is well and iustlye approued  
by the voyce of the churche, and the im-  
posicion of handes of the heedes of the  
pzeesters.

## **The heed & sheperd of the churche.**

**Christe verely hym selfe is the very**  
trewe heed of his churche and congre-  
gacion, and the onely pastoz and heerd,  
and he also geueth pzeysydētes, heedes,  
and teachers, to the entent that in the  
externall administracion they shulde  
vse the power of the churche well and  
lawfully,



lawfully, wherfoze we knowe not them  
that are heedes & pastozs in name one-  
ly, noz yet the Romenishe heedes.

### **T**he dutie of ministers oz officers.

The chiefe and pꝛyncypall offyce of  
this ministracion is to pꝛeache repen-  
taunce and remission of synne through  
Jesu Chꝛiste, to pꝛaye continually for  
the people, to geue diligence wholy to  
holy stodyes and to the woꝛde of God,  
and resyst and pursue the deuyll alway  
with the woꝛd of god, as w<sup>th</sup> the swoꝛde  
of the spirite, and that with a deadly ha-  
tered, and by all meanes to chasten him  
awaye, to defende the holy citizens of  
Chꝛiste.

And by all meanes compell and re-  
proue the faultie and vicious, and to ex-  
clude from the churche them that ste-  
reth to farre, and that by a godly con-  
sente and agreement of them whiche are  
chosen of þe ministers and magistrates

B.i.

for

foz coꝛreccyon, oꝛ to pounſhe them by a-  
ny other waye conuenient and pꝛofyta-  
ble meanes, ſo longe vntyll they come  
to a mendement, and ſo be ſafe, foꝛ this  
is the retuꝛnyng of the churche agay-  
ne, foꝛ one ſuche Citezen of Chꝛyſt yf he  
acknowlage and confeſſe his erroure  
with conuerted mynde and lyfe, foꝛ all  
this Doctryne ſeketh and wylleth that  
we requyre wyllynge and helthefull coꝛ-  
reccion, exhilarite, oꝛ comfoꝛte all godly  
by a newe ſtudy of godlynnes.

**O**f the power oꝛ ſtrengthe  
of ſacramentes.

There is twayne whiche are named  
in the church of God ſacramētes, Bap-  
tyme and howlynge, theſe be tokens of  
ſecrete thynges, that is of godly and  
ſpirituall thynges, of whiche thynges  
they take the name, are not of naked  
ſyngnes, but they are of ſyngnes and ve-  
rites together, foꝛ in baptiſme the wa-  
ter



ter is the sygne, but the thyng and be-  
 rytie is regeneracyon and adopcion, in  
 the people of God. In the howyllynge &  
 thankes gyuyng the bread and the  
 wyne are synes, but the thyng and be-  
 rytie is the communio of the body of  
 our lord, helthe and saluacion founde  
 and remysyon of synnes, the which are  
 receyved by faythe euen as the sygnes  
 and tokens are receyved by the bodely  
 mouth.

Wherfore we assyume the sacramen-  
 tes not onely to be badges and tokens  
 of christia societie, but to be also synes  
 of the grace of God, by the whiche the  
 ministers woꝛketh wíth God, to the  
 ende þ the promyse byngeth the woꝛke  
 to passe, but so as is aforesayde of the  
 ministracion of the woꝛde, that all the  
 same powꝛe be ascribed to the lord.

### ¶ Of Baptym.

We assyume Baptym to be by the in-  
 B. ii. stitucion

stitution of the lord, the laver of regeneration, the whiche regeneration the lord exhibiteth to his chosen by a visible signe by the ministracion of the congregacion as is aforesayde, in the which holy laver we walsh our infantes for this cause, because it is wyckednes to reiecte and cast out of the felowshyp & company of the people of God the that are borne of vs whiche are the people of God, excepte them that are expressely commaunded to be reiecte by the voyce of God, and for this cause chesely, because we shulde not presume vngodly of theyr election.

### **C** Of the sacrament of the aulter.

But the mysticall supper is in the whiche the lord offereth his body and his blode, that is his owne selfe verely to his owne, for this entent he myghte lyue more and more in them and they in hym / not so that the body and blode of  
the



the lozde are cōmuned naturally to the  
 bzead and wyne, oꝛ closed in them as in  
 one place, oꝛ put in them by any carnal  
 oꝛ meruelous pꝛesence, but bycause the  
 body and blode of oure lozde are recep=  
 upd verely of one faythful soule, and be  
 cause the bzead and the wyne by the in=  
 stituciō of the lozde, are tokens be whi=  
 cha the very communion oꝛ participa=  
 cyon of the lozdes body and blode are  
 exhibited of the lozde him selfe thzough  
 the mynistacion of the churche, not to  
 be a meat coꝛruptible of the belly, but to  
 be a noꝝphement and meat of eternal  
 lyfe

And this holy meat do we vse ofte  
 foꝛ this cause, foꝛ when thzough the ino=  
 nicion and remembraunce of it, we be=  
 holde withe the eye of our fayth, the de=  
 ath and blode of hym that was crucifi=  
 ed, and remember oure saluacyon and  
 helthe, not with out a taste of heauenly  
 lyfe, and very trewe felynge of eternall  
 lyfe/ when we do this we are wonder=  
 fully

fully refreshed throughe this spiritual  
lpyunge and eternall foode.

And that with an vnspeakeable sweet-  
nes we exulte and reioyce with a myght  
vnerpessable in wordes, for the salua-  
cion that is founde, and we all a whole  
are effuied with all our power and stre-  
ngth, vtterly in doyng of thanks for so  
wonderful a benefyte of Chyist toward  
vs

Therefore it is greatly without oure  
deseruynges that some aleges and say-  
eth of vs that we attyrbute lyttell to the  
holy sacrametes, for they are holy thyn-  
ges and honozable, bycause they are in-  
stitute and ordayned by our hye pzeest  
Chyist, and receyued exhibiting the thi-  
nges that they syngnifie in theyr owne  
maner as is aforesayd, beyng wptnes  
to the thinge that is done in dede, repre-  
sentynge so hye and harde thynge, a  
bynging by wonderfull corespondence  
and lykenes of similitude a lyght and  
a clerenes to the mynysters that they  
syngnyfie



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Switzerland  
signifie, so wholy is our beleue and  
estimacion of the sacramentes, but bere-  
ly appropriattynge the vertue of quic-  
kenynge and sanctifienge to hym onely  
whiche is lyfe, to whom be all honoure  
and prayse for euer Amen.

### **¶ Of comynge to churche.**

We beleue and thynke the holy con-  
gencions and gatherynge shulde be  
holden on this maner and sorte, so that  
first, chesely, and befoze all thynges the  
worde of God be preached to the people  
openlie in an open and publyke place,  
and that daylie, and the secrete and the  
obscure places of the scripture be ope-  
ned and declared by mete and competēt  
mē. And that by the holy supper of thā-  
kes, called howselynge, the faith of the  
godly be ofte exersysed, and that they  
shulde be contynually in prayer for all  
men, and for the necessities of all men.

But the rest of ceremonies, which as  
they

they are vnprofitable so are they innu-  
merable, as vefels, garmentes, ware,  
lyghtes, alters, golde, syluer, in somoch  
as they ferue to subuerte the trewe re-  
lygion of God, and chesely Idols and  
Images, that stande open to be wor-  
shyped, and geue offence and flaunder,  
and all suche prophane and vngodly  
thynges do we abādon reiecte and put  
awaye from the holy cōgregacion and  
conuencion.

### **C** Of heretyckes and sylmattyckes.

We also abandon and reiecte from  
our holy conuencions all them that de-  
parteth frō the societie and fellowshyp  
of the holy churche, and byngeth in  
straunge or vngodly sectes and opini-  
ons, with the whiche euyl the Anabap-  
tistes are chesely infecte this tyme/ the  
whiche we iudge shuld be constrayned  
and punished by the maiestrates and  
hys powers, yf they obstinately do resyst  
and



and wyl not obeye the monission of the church, and that for the entent that they shulde not infecte & corrupte the flocke of God throughe theyr wycked euill.

### **¶ Of thynges indyfferent.**

The thynges that are called, and indeede also are indifferent, howbeit a godly mā may vse them frely and in euery place and at all tymes, yet not withstandinge he shulde vse them with knowledge and of charitie to the glozy of God trewly, and the edificaciō of the churche and congregacion.

### **¶ Of Magistrates or gouernours.**

And seynge euery magistrate and hyghe powze is of God, his chiefe and pryncipall office is (excepte he wolde rather vse tyranny) to defende the trewe woꝛshipinge of God from all blassemy, and to procure trewe religion, and as  
the

the prophete dothe teache of the voyce  
of God, to execute for his power, in whi  
che part a trewe and sincere preaching  
of the worde of God remayneth with a  
ryghte and diligent institucion of the  
discipline of citezens, and of the scooles  
iust correccion and nurture, with libe-  
ralitie towarde the mynystres of the  
churche, with a sollicitat and thought-  
full charge of the poore, to the whiche  
ende all the rycheffe of the churche is re-  
ferred. This I saye hathe the fyrst and  
chefe place in the execucion of the magi-  
strat.

Then after to iudge the people by  
equall and godly lawes, to excersyce a  
mayntayne iudgement and iustice, to  
defende the commune welthe, and pu-  
nyshe transgressours accoꝝdyng to  
theyꝝ faulte, outher in goodes, theyꝝ bo-  
dies, oꝝ theyꝝ lyues, and when the ma-  
istrate executeth these thynges he ho-  
noꝝreth god as he shuld in his vocaciõ,  
and we (howebeit we be free bothe in  
our



our body and all our goodes, and in  
the studies of our mynde and thought  
also with a true faythe knoweth that  
we shulde be subiecte in holynes to the  
maiestrate, and shulde kepe fydeltie &  
promes to hym so longe as his com-  
maundementes, statutes, and imperes  
evidently repugneth not with him for  
whose sake we honour and worship the  
maiestrates.

### **O**f holy matrimony.

We Judge mariage whiche was in-  
stytute of God for all men apte & mete  
therfore, whiche are not called from it  
by any other vocaciō, to repugne to ho-  
lynnes of no orde, the whiche mariage  
as the church auctoriseth it, and cele-  
brates, and solempniseeth it with orison  
and prayer. And therfore we reiecte and  
refuse this monckely chastite and all  
hole this slouthful and slouggishe sorte  
of lyfe of superstitious men, as abomi-  
nably

nablye inuented and excogitat thynges,  
and abandon it as a thinge repugnant  
bothe to the comune weale and to the  
churche. And so confyrmeth and stablis-  
meth it, so it belōgeth to the magistrate  
to se that it be woꝛthely bothe begonne  
and woꝛshypped, and not broken but  
foꝛ a iust cause.

**A** declaracion oꝛ wytnessynge.  
of our mynde.

It is not our mynde foꝛ to pꝛescribe  
by this bꝛeefe chapters a certayne rule  
of the faythe to all churches and congre-  
gacions, foꝛ we knowe no other rule of  
faythe but the holy scripture/and ther-  
foꝛe we are well contented with them  
that agreeth with these thynges, howe  
beit they vse an other maner of spea-  
kyng oꝛ confession dyfferent apartly  
to this of ours in woꝛdes, foꝛ rather  
shulde the matter be consydered then  
the woꝛdes.

And



And therfoze we make it free foꝛ all  
men to vse theyꝛ owne soꝛte of speaking  
as they shall perceyue moſte profitable  
foꝛ theyꝛ churches, and we shall vse the  
ſame libertie.

And yf any man wyll attempte to coꝛ  
rupte the trewe meanyng of this oure  
confession he ſhall heare bothe a confeſſion  
and a deſe of the veritie & truth.

It was our pleaſure to vse theſe woꝛ  
des at this preſent tyme that we myght  
declare our opinton in our religio and  
woꝛſhippynge of God.

**F I R S T**

**The truth wyl haue the vpper haide.**